



PLACER COUNTY
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STEPHEN L. D'ARCY
UNDERSHERIFF

PRESS RELEASE

DATE/TIME OF RELEASE: April 21st, 2001 9pm
DATE/TIME OF OCCURRENCE: April 21st, 2001 3pm
NATURE OF CALL: Search and Rescue
LOCATION OF CALL: Five Lakes Drainage west of Alpine Meadows
CASE NUMBER: SO-01-006491
RELEASED BY: Sergeant Bill Langton

SHERIFF EDWARD N. BONNER RELEASES THE FOLLOWING:

On Saturday afternoon, April 21st, 2001 at approximately 3:00pm, the Placer County Sheriff's Department's Dispatch center received a report from Alpine Meadows Ski Patrol personnel that they had spotted a single snowboard track that lead northwest, out of bounds, from Ward Peak into the Five Lakes Drainage.

The Placer County Sheriff's Department launched one of it's helicopters, "Falcon 30" from the Auburn airport shortly thereafter. Falcon 30 responded to Alpine Meadows and picked up a member of the Ski Patrol. He showed them the track and they started following it down the west side of the Pacific Crest. They spotted the lone snowboarder waiving his arms in an effort to gain their attention several miles outside the ski resort.

Falcon 30 landed in the snow along Whiskey Creek and they picked up David Michael Johnson, 19 years old, of Tahoma. Johnson was wet, cold and tired. He had been wandering downhill since shortly after noon. Falcon 30 lifted off and brought Johnson to safety, landing back at Alpine Meadows.

Johnson was very lucky that Alpine Meadows personnel spotted his track. He had fallen into the creek after crossing it several times. He was wet and unprepared for the night ahead. Temperatures were expected to be well below freezing in the backcountry at that elevation. It is very unlikely that he would have survived overnight.

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